

CALFED BAY-DELTA WATERSHED PROGRAM

BDAC Watershed Work Group Meeting Summary

Meeting Date: Friday, September 28, 2001

Meeting Location: Jones & Stokes
2600 V Street
Sacramento, CA

Meeting Attendees: See Attachment A

Introductions

Watershed Work Group (Work Group) Co-Chair Martha Davis began the meeting with introductions. A list of attendees (Attachment A) is included with this summary.

Long-Term Planning for the CALFED Watershed Program and Watershed Work Group

Watershed Program Plan MOU

John Lowrie (CALFED Watershed Program) provided an update on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the CALFED Watershed Program (Watershed Program). The MOU defines the roles and responsibilities for implementation of the Watershed Program Plan. He indicated that the MOU has been reviewed by a number of agencies, and is currently being circulated for signatures.

Mr. Lowrie explained that the MOU originated from a task identified in the Record of Decision (ROD) for the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. The ROD assigned interim Watershed Program management responsibilities to CALFED staff. It directed the California Resources Agency (Resources Agency), State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to convene and establish long-term management responsibilities for Watershed Program implementation and to describe these responsibilities in an MOU. Negotiations between the agencies have concluded with agency agreement in principle to all elements of the MOU. Additionally, there has been concurrence of the CALFED Management and Policy groups.

The MOU establishes a Policy Committee to provide broad oversight, and ensure cooperation and coordination among agencies and their programs. This Policy Committee is composed of representatives from NRCS, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Resources Agency, SWRCB, Department of Water Resources (DWR), and CALFED.

The MOU also establishes a Management Team that is responsible for active management of the Program. Management agencies include USEPA, DWR, and SWRCB. CALFED staff, although not any agency, will also undertake management responsibilities. This management team will (1) provide a forum for assisting the Watershed Program with development of annual implementation plans; (2) work to improve coordination and communication among agencies, reduce duplication of effort, and promote resource sharing and information exchange; and (3) ensure effective communication between the Watershed Program and associated agencies. Furthermore, the Management Team recognizes the important role of the public, interested stakeholders, and specifically the Watershed Work Group in implementation of the Program.

Discussion

A meeting participant asked who developed the Policy Committee membership. Mr. Lowrie answered that Mary Nichols (Resources Agency Secretary of Natural Resources) determined the membership, wanting to strike a balance between federal and State resource agencies with an interest and commitment to watershed management. The USFWS asked permission to participate in the Policy Committee, and was accommodated.

Another participant asked what the difference is between the Policy Committee and the Management Team. Mr. Lowrie answered that the Policy Committee has broad oversight authority and provides long-term guidance, while the Management Team is responsible for the day-to-day operations. The Policy Committee will meet infrequently, while the Management Team requires a 50 percent time commitment from each dedicated agency staff member.

A meeting participant inquired about the individuals who will make up the Policy Committee. Mr. Lowrie indicated that Sam Ziegler would represent USEPA. A Statewide watershed coordinator and DWR representative have yet to be assigned.

Mr. Lowrie was asked if the Resource Agency is sending the MOU to all resource agencies. He responded that CALFED is responsible for circulating the MOU to individual agencies to obtain signatures.

Watershed Program Funding

Mr. Lowrie stated that in developing the Watershed Program Plan, costs were estimated at \$40 million per year for the first seven years of implementation. Most of this funding is dedicated to providing grants to community-based efforts supporting the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. The Watershed Program has received less than half that amount in its first two years, all from State funds. This year the Watershed Program was slated to receive \$20 million; however only \$10 million was appropriated from the State General Fund. The reduced funds are a result of the State's changing economic condition and energy shortage.

Planning for Future Watershed Work Group Meetings

Ms. Davis led a discussion to define the meeting and work schedule for the Work Group. She proposed holding a number of future Work Group meetings “on the road.” The purpose of the “road meetings” would be to

- better communicate the activities of the Watershed Program to those who are not actively involved in the CALFED process,
- hear and learn from local watershed groups about what is happening in their areas, and
- observe projects and “success stories” funded by the Watershed Program.

Hosting the Work Group meetings in different locations around the State would serve to remedy the disconnection between stakeholders’ interests and CALFED goals and objectives, and address the varied issues concerning different regions. It is important for the Work Group participants to understand what is going on in areas outside of their own watersheds. Ms. Davis reminded the meeting participants that at the Work Group’s previous meeting (7/20/01), it was suggested that

- meetings should still be held in Sacramento every other month, with traveling meetings on alternate months;
- advanced notification and preparation/groundwork must occur to encourage participation; and
- objectives should be established ahead of time.

A proposed schedule for the next calendar year was presented, and participants were invited to comment.

Discussion

A concern was raised regarding the potential loss of continuity and momentum by holding meetings outside of Sacramento. Bringing new participants “up to speed” would require significant time. Conversely, another participant commented that local communities often are unaware of larger issues because they are focused on their own watersheds. The road show meetings would help to fill that gap.

One meeting participant suggested holding a road show meeting quarterly rather than every other month. This would encourage communication with other areas of the State while still preserving continuity in the Work Group. Another participant suggested road show meetings three times per year, with day 1 being a tour and day 2, policy discussion.

Another meeting participant suggested that the Work Group stay focused on policy issues rather than getting bogged down with “on-the-ground” issues. However, in order to keep the agenda to policy issues it would be best to keep the meetings in Sacramento. Other meeting attendees responded that the distinction between on-the-ground work and policy is murky. Perhaps on-the-ground efforts need to be raised to a policy level. Another participant noted that the Work Group

needs to ensure outreach to local groups to develop relationships with other locales that share common policy issues.

A comment was made that local groups appreciate public outreach as an indication of good will on the part of CALFED. Another participant suggested an alternative approach in which local agency representatives from throughout the State would regularly be invited to stakeholder meetings.

Renee Hoyos of the Resources Agency proposed holding the first road show meeting in combination with the California Biodiversity Council (CBC) meeting in Modesto in mid-November.

Ms. Davis thanked everyone for their comments and suggested that the Watershed Program staff develop a proposal and present it to the Work Group at the next meeting.

Interagency Watershed Advisory Team Draft Charter Development

Sam Ziegler (USEPA) distributed a copy of the draft charter for the Interagency Watershed Advisory Team (IWAT). He explained that the Watershed Program MOU calls for the establishment of a new IWAT. Revitalizing IWAT will allow increased coordination of and communication between federal and State agencies. Mr. Ziegler has drafted a mission statement and list of IWAT responsibilities.

Reviewing the draft document with the Work Group, Mr. Ziegler explained that the purpose of IWAT is to facilitate implementation of the Watershed Program through improved coordination and communication. IWAT will be composed of individuals who represent State and federal agencies that have signed the Watershed Program MOU. IWAT will be co-chaired by a State agency representative from DWR and a federal agency representative from USEPA.

The primary responsibilities of IWAT will be to

- develop an annual implementation plan that outlines specific details on how Watershed Program implementation will be carried out;
- coordinate technical assistance to local communities; and
- create a positive communication network among the involved agencies, the Work Group, and CALFED.

Secondary responsibilities of IWAT include assisting with

- development of programmatic performance measures and tracking performance of the Watershed Program and individual projects that it supports;
- support of watershed education and outreach; and
- financial support for local watershed activities.

Discussion

A participant asked how the revitalized IWAT will differ from the previous IWAT. Mr. Ziegler responded that the modified team will prevent the diminishment of agency commitment over time by increasing buy-in by agencies.

Another participant asked who the agency representatives will be. Mr. Ziegler responded that those working in local watersheds (such as middle managers) are preferred participants. It is anticipated that approximately 15 individuals will comprise IWAT.

Ms. Davis noted that there is a need for improved coordination among agencies. She suggested that an agenda item for the next Work Group meeting should be to discuss planning for revisions to the Implementation Plan and issues to be addressed by IWAT.

Mr. Ziegler invited participants to submit comments to him via email (ziegler.sam@epamail.epa.gov).

Watershed Program Proposal Solicitation Package

Mr. Lowrie provided an update on the upcoming Watershed Program Proposal Solicitation Package (PSP). He indicated that the PSP for fiscal year 2001–2002 will be a joint process with Proposition 13 (Prop 13) programs. Watershed Program staff is working with SWRCB staff to develop a PSP that will address goals of both parties. A joint release of the PSP will allow participants to fill out one concept proposal form that will be considered by multiple programs. Concept proposals will be distributed to the most appropriate recipient program, which will then ask for development of full proposals. The Watershed Program will look at the applications as a whole. It will select those eligible for full proposal development. The PSP will be released in approximately three months.

Discussion

A meeting participant suggested that the SWRCB provide a paper application in addition to an online copy. Another stated that greater consistency of application questions is needed between the concept and full proposals. Mr. Coulter responded that concept proposals will be simplified from last year. A participant also commented that former applicants or Work Group participants should be included to consult on development of application questions (if not planning to apply). Another suggested that a joint application is preferable in that it discourages applicants from tailoring proposals to individual programs.

One participant asked how outreach and technical assistance would be provided to applicants. Mr. Lowrie stated that it is unlikely that workshops would be held before the concept proposal due date. If desired, Work Group members should formally request additional outreach via a joint letter to Patrick Wright (CALFED Executive Director) from the Work Group co-chairs. Dennis Bowker (Watershed Program) indicated that the Watershed Program team was unable to provide the level of assistance requested during the last PSP round because of legal technicalities. Furthermore, he stated that many applicants confuse the Watershed Program PSP

with the Ecosystem Restoration Program PSP, and more workshops would provide additional guidance and clarification.

Watershed Partnership Seminar Debriefing

Dennis Bowker (Watershed Program) gave a debriefing of the Watershed Partnership Seminar held September 17–28 at the Red Lion Inn in Sacramento. The first Watershed Partnership Seminar was held several years ago in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, by the USEPA Office of Planning and Management (OPM) to develop partnership skills among agencies, stakeholders, elected officials, scientists, etc. This year is the first time the seminar has been held in California and at a site other than an OPM campus. Mr. Bowker stated that nominations for participants were solicited, and more than 70 were received. Of those nominations, 40 students were selected. Alumni were encouraged to share their experiences with the Work Group.

One seminar participant stated that the students were given practical and philosophical tools. They focused on capacity building, good will toward CALFED, networking, and how to understand each other's issues and challenges. They now better understand the need for partnerships. The expenditure of funds by the Watershed Program was well worthwhile.

Another alum commented that personal and valuable relationships were built at the seminar. There will be no problem securing participation for future seminars; students will recommend that their colleagues apply.

Ms. Davis suggested the seminar's first year reunion be coordinated with a Work Group meeting. Another participant suggested a press release be offered to share the positive message.

Environmental Justice Debriefing

Dan Wermiel (Watershed Program) provided an overview of the CALFED Environmental Justice Workshops that have taken place throughout the State. The purpose of the workshops is to work with local communities to address disproportionate impacts on minority populations. Three workshops have been held to date: Richmond (Bay Region), Delano (San Joaquin Region), and Stockton (Delta Region). Additional workshops are scheduled to be held in Redding and Los Angeles. Many concerns were raised by local residents at these workshops including: urban issues and agricultural issues, environmental water quality, drinking water quality, flooding, and water infrastructure.

A participant commented that the Environmental Justice Workshops and the future Work Group should address access to funding opportunities. Mr. Wermiel responded that the Workgroup will be an effective way to address access to opportunities. Another participant suggested using the workshops to identify what CALFED can do programmatically to address environmental justice needs.

Watershed Updates

CBC Watershed Work Group—Ms. Hoyos indicated that the CBC Watershed Work Group meeting would be held in Modesto on November 14 and 15. All interested parties are invited to attend.

Assembly Bill 2117—Ms. Hoyos reported that she and SWRCB staff are moving forward with interviews of watershed groups. To date, 9 of 10 interviews have been completed. A draft outline of the report will be available in October.

Meeting Participants

Name	Affiliation
Ames, Laurel	Sierra Nevada Alliance
Barris, Lynn	Friends of the River
Blankenship, Ann	California Conservation Corps
Bowker, Dennis	Sacramento River Watershed Program/CALFED
Bradt, Josh	Urban Creeks Council
Bratcher, Tricia	California Department of Fish and Game
Buzzard, Diane	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Cantrell, Scott	California Department of Fish and Game
Chetelat, Guy	Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
Cornelius, James	Calaveras County Water District
Coulter, Ken	State Water Resources Control Board
Crooks, Bill	City of Sacramento
Davis, Martha	Inland Empire Utilities District
Estrada, Torri	Environmental Justice Coalition for Water
Fischer, Chris	The Nature Conservancy
Flores, J. R.	Natural Resources Conservation Service
Flores, Kesner	Cortina Indian Rancheria
Fox, Dennis	Not indicated
Frohm, Tim	California Farm Bureau Federation
Gaumer, Dianne	Deer Creek Watershed
Gould, Randy	U.S. Forest Service
Hancock, John	Upper Lake Rancheria
Hard, Eddie	USGS/CALFED Science Program
Harter, Rick	LA & San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council
Heiman, Dennis	Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
Helfer, Dana	California Coordinated Resource Management Program
Henly, Russ	California Department of Forestry
Hewitt, John	California Farm Bureau Federation
Hoyos, Renee	California Resources Agency
Jerauld, Frank	Amador RCD
Jacobs, Selene	Jones & Stokes
Knecht, Mary Lee	Jones & Stokes
Lavelle, Jane	City and County of San Francisco
Lowrie, John	CALFED
Lowrey, Jan	Cache Creek Conservancy
Meacher, Robert	Plumas County
Morris, Frank	Solano County Water Agency
Nakagawa, Brandon	San Joaquin County Public Works
Obedoza, Santos	Upper Lake Rancheria

Ohlson, John	Yolo County
Peracca, Galen	Not indicated
Piekarz, Ed	Not indicated
Prange, Paul	City of San Jose
Reed, Rhonda	California Department of Fish and Game
Reeve, Matt	California Department of Food and Agriculture
Richards, Lora	Tetra Tech
Rivenes, Barbara	Yuba Watershed Council
Rivenes, Don	Yuba Watershed Council
Roberts, Ken	Yuba Conservancy
Shaffer, Kevin	California Department of Fish and Game
Sime, Fraser	Department of Water Resources
Smith, Lynda	Metropolitan Water District
Stevenson, Michael	ESA
Sullivan, Marie	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Swearingen, Vieva	Cottonwood Creek Watershed Group
Takata, Eileen	San Gabriel Mountains Regional Conservancy
Thomas, Lenore	U.S. Bureau of Land Management
Thomas, Rick	San Gabriel Mountains Regional Conservancy
Todt, Iovanka	San Diego County
Treppa Diego, Leora	Upper Lake Rancheria
Voege, Hal	Community Outreach Consultants
Watson, John	Cache Creek Conservancy
Webb, Olin	BUHP Community Advocates
Wemiel, Dan	CALFED
White, Peter	Lake Berryessa Watershed Partnership
Wills, Leah	Forest Community Research
Zidar, Matt	ESA
Ziegler, Sam	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency